

Spring 2011

New Marketing Initiatives for Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement

Anthony G. Naglieri
Binghamton University--SUNY

Follow this and additional works at: https://orb.binghamton.edu/mpa_capstone_archive



Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Naglieri, Anthony G., "New Marketing Initiatives for Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement" (2011). *MPA Capstone Projects 2006 - 2015*. 44.
https://orb.binghamton.edu/mpa_capstone_archive/44

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by the Dissertations, Theses and Capstones at The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in MPA Capstone Projects 2006 - 2015 by an authorized administrator of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact ORB@binghamton.edu.

New Marketing Initiatives for Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement

By

Anthony G. Naglieri

BS, Binghamton University, 2006

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters in Public Administration in
the Graduate School of Binghamton University
State University of New York
2011

Accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters in Public Administration in
the Graduate School of Binghamton University
State University of New York
2011

Kristina Lambright
Assistant Professor and Director of Graduate Studies
Department of Public Administration
May 12, 2011

Thomas Sinclair
Associate Professor
Department of Public Administration
May 12, 2011

Allison Alden
Founding Director
Binghamton University Center for Civic Engagement
May 12, 2011

Executive Summary

Students are vital to fulfill the Center for Civic Engagement's mission to strengthen relationships between Binghamton University and the community. As a new office, engaging and fostering support amongst students and instituting effective means of reaching them is an essential component for establishing a viable center.

At the onset of its growing year, CCE's marketing strategies were ill-equipped to reach a student demographic that is continually evolving and increasingly reliant on the internet and new technologies for its information needs. The ability to understand and effectively adapt to the changing expectations and preferences of students is a vital component to CCE's efforts to appeal to a broader audience.

This research addresses how CCE can improve its marketing and outreach processes to raise awareness of its services and offerings among Binghamton University students. Relevant literature on student engagement, information technology use, and modern marketing approaches was examined to foster a better understanding of how CCE can extend its reach among students. The report analyzes qualitative data collected from focus groups consisting of 33 Binghamton University students, along with results of a pilot experiment which tested the ability of CCE's social media offerings to move students to action.

The data collected highlighted accessibility, convenience, and responsiveness as important components in effective outreach. The study's findings call for CCE to address these characteristics through a multi-faceted approach that ensures information is available through various mediums and fosters a spirit of community among students through online networks and collaborative initiatives on and off campus.

Table of Contents

Problem Definition.....	1
Research Questions.....	4
Literature Review.....	4
Student Engagement	4
Students & Information Technology Use	6
Modern Marketing Approaches	7
Methodology	8
Data Collection	9
Focus Groups	9
Service On the Spot Pilot Test	11
Limitations	11
Data Analysis	12
Findings.....	12
Recommendations.....	21
Conclusion	26
References.....	28
Appendixes	31
A – Current CCE Outreach and Dissemination Methods	32
B – Focus Group Information	33
C – Pre-Focus Group Survey	34
D – Focus Group Participant Information Sheet.....	36
E – Focus Group Oral Consent and Audio Release Statement.....	37
F – CCE Outreach Materials Used in Priming Exercise.....	38
G – Focus Group Questionnaire	41
H – IRB Approval.....	42

List of Figures

Participants' Use of Social Media & ICT Applications.....17

List of Tables

Outlets Mentioned for Increasing CCE's Visibility Among Students.....20

Problem Definition

Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) is a newly formed office within the Division of Student Affairs created to address the institution's need for a more centralized approach toward community engagement. CCE's primary focus is to stimulate and support campus-wide interest in this important realm of activity, with a particular emphasis placed on experiential learning (Center for Civic Engagement, 2010). The office was formally launched on June 24, 2010, and its efforts were initiated on a full-time basis in August of 2010.

One of the primary challenges CCE faces in its “building year” centers on establishing its identity and settling into a niche among other established campus units. Many of the services and programs CCE offers have been provided on campus in some form or another, often for years. Its new role is to help promote and support these endeavors, while striving to improve current offerings and develop new programs. The opportunity to build from the ground up is advantageous as it affords CCE great control in distinguishing its services and programs. There are, however, several constraints inherent with being a completely new unit.

Whenever a new office or center is created within a University setting, significant effort must be dedicated to informing others on campus and beyond (CCE, 2010). CCE serves several constituencies, each of whom has different information needs, interests, and motivations. Its core audiences include university students, faculty, staff, and community groups within the Greater Binghamton area and beyond. Fostering support among these groups and instituting effective means of reaching them will be a vital component of establishing a viable center.

With nearly 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students, building awareness among the Binghamton University student body poses a significant challenge for a campus start-up with limited staff and resources. At the time that this research was initially conceived, CCE's

promotional processes were not equipped to successfully reach a large audience of students to perform effective outreach.

Students represent a unique demographic vital to the fulfillment of CCE's mission to strengthen relationships between the University and community. Generally, the ways students use the Internet, inside and outside the University setting, and think about technology is constantly changing (Caruso & Smith, 2010). Most students do not want to walk into an office or be troubled with placing a phone call. While traditional means of communication may be adequate to reach other core audiences, it is different with this group. CCE cannot afford to rely on its "old models, old perspective and old people" to reach a student demographic that is continually evolving (Alden, personal communication, November 2, 2010).

Indications that student information needs were not currently being met came via a student focus group conducted in April 2010 by the CCE director. The objective of the focus group was to identify how students seek out and succeed in obtaining information on-line about BU service, research, and community-based academic opportunities. The outcomes of the focus group, as well as individual meetings with students held by the CCE director, universally pointed toward a preference for online interaction and the need to upgrade CCE's virtual presence (Alden, student focus groups, April 2010).

A review of CCE's distribution methods used in Fall 2010 accentuated the need for improved marketing processes. While there were a number of actively involved students aware of CCE's presence, the office's interactions with the student population is primarily through its website and listserv. Currently, its web offerings remain largely "a work in progress." Information on volunteer programs was described as "disorganized" and "confusing" (Alden, student focus groups, April 2010). A review of the site revealed multiple non-functioning links

as well as a database of community opportunities that was inundated with inaccurate and outdated information. With over 1,500 contacts, the office listserv remains an important means of contacting students. The mailing list was previously maintained by BU's Volunteer Programs office, which was subsumed in the formation of CCE, and while efforts were made to manage the list, many shortcomings existed. No protocol was established for utilizing the listserv, contacts were outdated, requests to be removed from the list often were not fulfilled, and communications, at times, included inaccurate information (Alden, personal communication, November 2, 2010).

While efforts by staff are underway to improve the current offerings, it was apparent that CCE needed to rethink the manners in which it disseminates information to students. The resources (time, staff, and technical know-how) available to CCE to address this area are limited. This is an important area to address as it could curtail the effectiveness of the office's outreach efforts. In order to deepen its current partnerships and develop new connections, CCE's disconnect with engaging students must be addressed. In fact, the forms of information dissemination have evolved at a very fast pace over the last six months, largely due to the input this research project has already had. This report will extend and expand current efforts and provide documentation that could bolster future funding initiatives. A list of CCE's current outreach and dissemination methods is presented in Appendix A.

This issue also has important implications for the field of public administration. As new technologies become more predominant, the task of engaging and providing information to the public continues to become more challenging. This study will provide insight into how young people absorb information, the particular mediums by which they prefer to be informed, as well as how effective these mediums are at mobilizing young adults. For practitioners, the results of

this study may provide an impetus to begin rethinking the mechanisms by which information is disseminated to their constituents, particularly the younger generation.

Research Question(s)

1. How can CCE improve its current marketing efforts to make them more effective in reaching and engaging Binghamton University students?
2. In addition to its current offerings, what are the most effective and efficient strategies that CCE can use to reach a broader audience of students?

Literature Review

The ability to understand how the behavior, needs, and preferences of younger demographics are evolving has important implications across disciplines. How to capture the attention and effectively serve these populations is an issue at the crux of higher education and the student affairs profession. With that in mind, several bodies of literature were examined to foster better understanding of how CCE can extend its reach with Binghamton University students including: student engagement, students and information technology use, and modern marketing approaches.

Student Engagement

The construct of engagement in higher education is largely driven by Alexander Astin's (1984) student involvement theory, which asserted that increased student involvement is directly tied to greater personal development, growth, and achievement. Involvement, now referred to as engagement, includes investment both in and outside the classroom (i.e. time and effort spent interacting with peers, faculty, and staff, as well as time and effort spent participating in co-curricular activities). The landmark study made several important pedagogical contributions, including: focusing on student motivation and behavior, viewing students' time and energy as valued, but finite resources, and assessing successful practice by the degree of involvement

fostered. Research has since expanded upon this notion and affirmed the importance involvement holds in successful educational outcomes (Chickering & Kamson, 1987; Kuh, 2009).

Building on Astin's recommendations, Kuh (2009) urges higher education institutions to start viewing engagement as a two-way street and no longer maintain a mindset that places the onus solely on students to adjust to an institution's policies and practices. This call to reexamine program and service design to better meet the needs and preferences of students is echoed across student affairs literature (Jones & Hill, 2003; Lowery, 2004; Winniford, Carpenter, & Grider, 1997). The first step towards improving service is to better understand student motivations and preferences.

The motivation to participate in different activities varies from student-to-student and across differing circumstances, with many subtle differences when it comes to volunteer service (Winniford et. al, 1997). The literature consistently points towards the important role of peers and the need for affiliation in motivating others towards engagement. Recent findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement (2010) affirmed that shared learning activities among students were positively related to heightened involvement and other forms of engagement (p. 19). Participation in clubs, student organizations, or service activities often provides individuals with the means to meet new people and further develop their social networks (Jones & Hill, 2003, Winniford et. al, 1997).

In addition to general apathy, demands on students' time looms as the largest deterrent to participation in service and engagement activities (Raill & Hollander, 2006; Zimmerman & Halfacre-Hitchcock, 2006). As recently as 2008, "half of full-time first-year students and three-quarters of seniors at four-year colleges and universities" maintained responsibilities for paid

work on top of their academic requirements according to a 2008 NSSE survey (as cited in Kuh, 2009). It is, thus, no surprise that students today increasingly have shown preferences for offerings that are convenient, accessible, and allow for instant gratification (Lowery, 2004; Moneta, 2005; Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008).

Students & Information Technology Use

Student affairs organizations are increasingly embracing innovations in information and communication technology (ICT) in order to connect and engage with modern students. ICT progress has led to an environment today where internet access pervades society and is engrained in daily life, especially that of college students. A recent nationwide study indicated that internet use is close to ubiquitous (93 percent) among teenagers and young adults (Zickuhr, 2010). The study showed younger populations (ages 12-33) to be most active in social activities across the web, while displaying an increased propensity for using mobile technologies. Caruso and Smith (2010) affirmed these findings and identify text messaging and the use of social networking websites as the most prevalent forms of ICT use among students.

While still a nascent field, a positive relationship between information technology use and student engagement has found support, with institutional resources serving an important role (Laird & Kuh, 2005). Heiberger and Harper (2008) recently built upon these findings by drawing positive connections between the use of social networking sites and increased student engagement. Moreover, use of the internet as a resource and interactive forum has been shown to spur civic engagement, at times more so than traditional means of media and communications (Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005).

For student affairs practitioners, the need to assess students' use of technologies and how their accompanying expectations influence their offerings has taken on heightened importance.

Institutions often are ill-suited to accommodate increasingly tech-savvy students (Moneta, 2005). Reflecting this, calls for higher education institutions to become more adept at change and “meet students where they are” are common refrains in research (Cotten, 2008; Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008, Lloyd, Dean, & Cooper, 2007). There is no definitive answer to this growing phenomenon. However, frequently cited suggestions include: utilizing multiple marketing mediums, remaining open minded to innovation, adopting a real-time mindset, personalizing communications and fostering an ongoing dialogue with students to determine preferences for interaction (Heiberger & Harper, 2008; Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008).

Modern Marketing Approaches

Adapting to the always-evolving student demographic presents unique marketing challenges for student affairs organizations. According to Kotler & Levy (1969), marketing serves as “the function of an organization that can keep in constant touch with consumers, assess their needs and develop ‘products’ that meet identified needs.” This classic article champions a consumer orientation and remains relevant for marketing in today’s information-rich internet era, where time is of the essence, speed is rewarded, and brands are largely defined by experiences, interactions, and perceptions of consumers (Scott, 2010; Dobeles, Toleman, & Beverland, 2005; PR 20/20, 2010).

Viral marketing is one unique approach amenable to younger populations that accounts for these environmental factors and has potential for generating buzz, spurring word-of-mouth referral, and engaging widespread audiences. In order to be successful, such campaigns must reach their target audience with a compelling message, ease participation, encourage individuals to share content, leverage technology, and link to an organization’s mission (Dobele et. al, 2005).

Inbound marketing is another means of bridging the physical and virtual worlds and tapping into students' social networks. This progressive approach is founded on the idea of leveraging an organization's web presence (i.e. search-engine optimization and social media) and "getting found" by customers, rather than devoting a majority of resources to traditional methods where efforts are concentrated on pushing the message out (PR 20/20, 2010; HubSpot, 2008). It emphasizes the importance of digital visibility and advocates for organizations to engage with consumers via social platforms.

With consideration to the constant advances in ICTs, marketing and student affairs professionals alike champion notions of using a multi-faceted approach and adapting one's mindset to the environment, not to specific technologies (Cotten, 2008; Munoz & Strotmeyer, 2010; Scott, 2010). The discussion of how CCE can effectively leverage these strategies and incorporate new technologies in a way that helps engage a greater audience of students must first begin with better understanding student preferences.

Methodology

In order to assess how students prefer to receive information from CCE and determine effective strategies to meet these preferences, it is important to first understand students' perspectives. Student focus groups, thus, were determined to be the most appropriate data collection method for this study. Focus groups are a direct and interactive method of assessing student opinions and attitudes. The open dialogue allows for different points of view to be illuminated and affords the researcher with the unique opportunity to observe the extent and nature of participants' agreement and disagreement (Morgan, 1996).

To gather further information on the effectiveness of the office's outreach methods, a pilot-testing experiment was also conducted around a new CCE initiative focused on involving

students in spontaneous acts of service on and off campus. This initiative draws directly from the literature on modern marketing approaches and was used to test CCE's presence on social networking sites and its effectiveness in moving students to action. This additional measure enhanced the completeness and confirmation of data in the overall findings.

Data Collection

Focus Groups.

Four student focus groups were conducted during March 2011. The source of the participant population was willing Binghamton University students (undergraduate and graduate). Individuals interested in the study were placed into focus groups based on their availability. Each focus group lasted for at least one hour. The study included 33 total participants. Additional information on each focus group is presented in Appendix B.

Short pre-focus group surveys were administered electronically, via iPod Touch devices distributed to participants upon arrival, and were completed prior to the discussion. The surveys collected basic demographic information and aimed to assess whether students had previously been involved with CCE before and/or have previously participated in service and engagement activities. This helped to provide a sense of whether the desired audience for the focus groups was reached. The pre-focus group survey is presented in Appendix C. Confidentiality was not guaranteed due to the collection of data within a group format, however, steps were taken to insure that no personally identifiable data was collected. Included in Appendix D is a copy of the participant information sheet, while the oral consent and audio release statement is presented in Appendix E.

Upon completing the survey, a priming exercise was conducted in which participants viewed a snapshot of CCE's outreach materials, including: its Facebook page via the iPod

Touch, student brochure, and weekly newsletter. In addition to these materials, free t-shirts were distributed to all participants. The t-shirts are a promotional component of CCE's new spontaneous service program and feature a growing form of mobile advertising known as quick response (QR) codes. An explanation of the new program was discussed prior to each group discussion. Examples of these CCE marketing materials and t-shirts can be found in Appendix F

A focus group questionnaire containing open-ended questions was utilized to maintain consistency, though the sessions were semi-structured, allowing for the flexibility to probe for details or discuss relevant issues. The CCE director reviewed the questionnaire prior to the sessions and suggestions were incorporated to enhance the data collection efforts. The questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix G.

Access to students through personal contacts and pre-existing relationships with students, student groups, academic departments and offices developed via the services CCE delivers was utilized in focus group recruitment. Snowball sampling was used to reach an audience not already familiar with CCE. Participants interested in the study were asked to recruit additional subjects from among their acquaintances. Individuals were intentionally asked to invite someone who is not as involved on campus and/or who may not have prior exposure to the office. Because CCE wishes to expand its audience including these students was deemed a priority in recruitment. Participation in the focus groups was entirely voluntary.

Thirty-three students participated in this study. The recruited sample was comprised of 17 females and 16 males. Of the participants, there were four freshmen, five sophomores, eight juniors, 11 seniors and five graduate students. The participants' majors represented six different academic disciplines: arts and humanities; business; education; social and behavioral sciences; math/engineering/computer science/technology; and public administration/social work/student

affairs. One participant identified himself as undeclared. Twenty of the 33 participants identified themselves as familiar with CCE prior to the focus group, while 17 indicated they were members of the office's listserv. All but four individuals identified themselves as having participated in some form of involvement activity as a student. The degree to which they were involved, however, was not addressed.

Service On the Spot Pilot Test.

To supplement the results of the four student focus groups, the results of a pilot test experiment CCE conducted in February 2011 were also utilized. The experiment leveraged CCE's presence on social networking sites in its promotion of a new initiative, *Service On the Spot* (S.O.S). This program helps to address community and campus needs by incorporating the aforementioned ideals of viral marketing and the recent popularity of flash mobs (a group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, perform some act for a brief time then disperse). CCE puts out a "call for help" in the days and hours leading up to an event, sending out details about the specific service project exclusively via its social networking sites, and recruiting individuals to participate in meaningful activities. The results of this test experiment provided valuable insight into the reach of CCE's current marketing instruments and their effectiveness in moving students to action.

Limitations

There are many different methods to reach and engage students. One of the limitations inherent in using focus groups, as well as other qualitative methods, is that it is not representative. While the feedback received from the 33 participants is useful in testing concepts, fine-tuning outreach methods, and investigating preferences for information; it by no means can be said to reflect the larger population of Binghamton University students.

The extent to which recruitment efforts were representative of the audience CCE seeks to reach was an important factor in this study. Because CCE aims to expand its reach and appeal to a broader audience, it was important that the perspectives of students not already familiar with the office and/or students who were not already involved were included in this study. The study was successful in attracting 16 participants who were not already receiving CCE communications via its listserv, 13 of whom identified themselves as unfamiliar with the office prior to the focus groups. The degree to which the participating students were already involved on- and-off campus, however, was not assessed and represents a limitation to the data collected. Knowing this information would help provide a clearer picture of the audience the focus groups were successful in reaching.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the four student focus groups was analyzed thematically. Upon completion of the focus groups, a thorough review of the session notes and transcript was conducted and analyzed using an inductive method, searching for patterns and commonalities surrounding particular questions and across group sessions.

Findings

Focus group participants provided unique and diverse insight into their preferences for receiving information, the mediums which are effective and ineffective in reaching them, their reactions towards current CCE marketing efforts, their expectations from a University office, as well as ideas for how to reach students who are not currently involved and/or aware of CCE's resources. Several consistent themes emerged from the four sessions: 1) students demonstrated a strong interest in getting involved with CCE; 2) accessibility, convenience, and responsiveness are integral components of effective student outreach; 3) the opportunity for shared experiences

and to learn about opportunities from peers is important to students; 4) an active presence on social networking sites and making information available via mobile devices can be useful tools for reaching and mobilizing students; 5) CCE must be vigilant in the manner and methods with which it disseminates information to maintain an engaged student audience; and 6) it is important for CCE to distinguish itself and maintain a visible presence across campus.

Finding 1: Students demonstrated a strong interest in getting involved with CCE.

Reaching and maintaining an engaged audience amongst students is a critical factor in CCE's efforts to continue to grow into a viable center. Both the turnout and level of interest exhibited during the four sessions offered encouraging signs. As one participant noted, "This is great. I never knew this existed. I have a mandatory service requirement that I was dreading and now I feel much better knowing I can not only find something, but find something I want to do." The discussions in each of the first three focus group sessions continued well past the allotted duration of time (one hour) in spite of the fact all topics had been covered. Moreover, two or more students willingly stayed following every session to inquire how to begin getting more involved with CCE, learn about current opportunities, and/or share more ideas about how CCE can reach a greater audience of students. Of the 16 participants not already signed up for the CCE listserv, 14 opted to receive communications either immediately following the session or in the subsequent days via personal e-mail contact. Additionally, seven individuals subscribed to receive the office's social media updates via Facebook. In all four sessions, at least one participant affiliated with a student group or project mentioned interest in either partnering with CCE or utilizing the office to help promote their initiatives.

Finding 2: Accessibility, convenience, and responsiveness are integral components of effective student outreach.

All four sessions touched on the importance of websites being easy to navigate with updated and current information. A common obstacle described was not being able to find desired information and/or having to click through multiple pages to locate it. As one participant summed it up, “I want a website to take me quickly to where I need to go. Students don’t have the time and don’t want to wait. We’re too busy.”

Across multiple sessions, preferences for personalized and customizable content, including the ability to view a website in different languages, as well as the ability to perform refined searches for information were offered. It was also deemed important to make offerings available across multiple mediums, including social networking sites, as well as to utilize tools that provide event reminders, such as Facebook events and Google Calendar. Participants in all four focus group sessions communicated frustrations with not being able to find and receive information when they need it. There were multiple mentions alluding to an existing disconnect between the busy schedules and lifestyle of students and the traditional hours maintained and supports available via campus offices. Participants in each session also indicated a strong interest in receiving information outside of traditional hours. As one student put it, “Sometimes my free time doesn’t start until 4 or 5 pm. It really limits you. The option to access information and answers at night or somehow over the weekend would be really important.”

The response to CCE’s weekly newsletter, one of the office’s primary outreach tools, was largely positive, but revealed a preference for a more convenient-to-read format. As one participant put it, “I receive the newsletter and quite frankly, I don’t read it because I don’t have the time to read through that much information.” Others added that it could be “a bit

overbearing,” should be “more concise,” and that “students just don’t have the time to consume this much information.” The variety of opportunities, multitude of links, as well as the three-column format, were all considered strong points. Its utility was often compared to B-Line, the University-wide e-mail of daily announcements. While there was dissenting opinion on B-Line’s effectiveness, its ability to be quickly scanned was deemed very important. In the final focus group session, participants were provided with an updated edition of the newsletter intentionally formatted with more concise descriptions. This was the only session where feedback related to having too much written copy was not offered.

Across each session, the desire to be able to receive answers quickly was deemed a priority. It was, however, acknowledged that receiving a timetable on when an answer could be expected was valued and would likely suffice on most occasions. As one participant noted, “It is important that you get a response even if you do not get the answers you are looking for right away. Even if it is an automated response that tells me I will hear something within 24 or 48 hours. It helps you feel like you matter.” Suggestions included having Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) pages online or having the option to connect with a staff member via instant message chat.

Finding 3: The opportunity for shared experiences and to learn about opportunities from peers is important to students.

Focus group participants collectively agreed they would be more inclined to participate in an activity when they had friends or knew others who would be participating as well. As one participant described, “You don’t want to go somewhere by yourself usually. Sometimes that is why I don’t get involved in as many things as I could.” A few individuals mentioned they would not necessarily disregard an opportunity just because they didn’t know others attending, but also

described the opportunity for shared experiences as an “important and fun part of the college experience.”

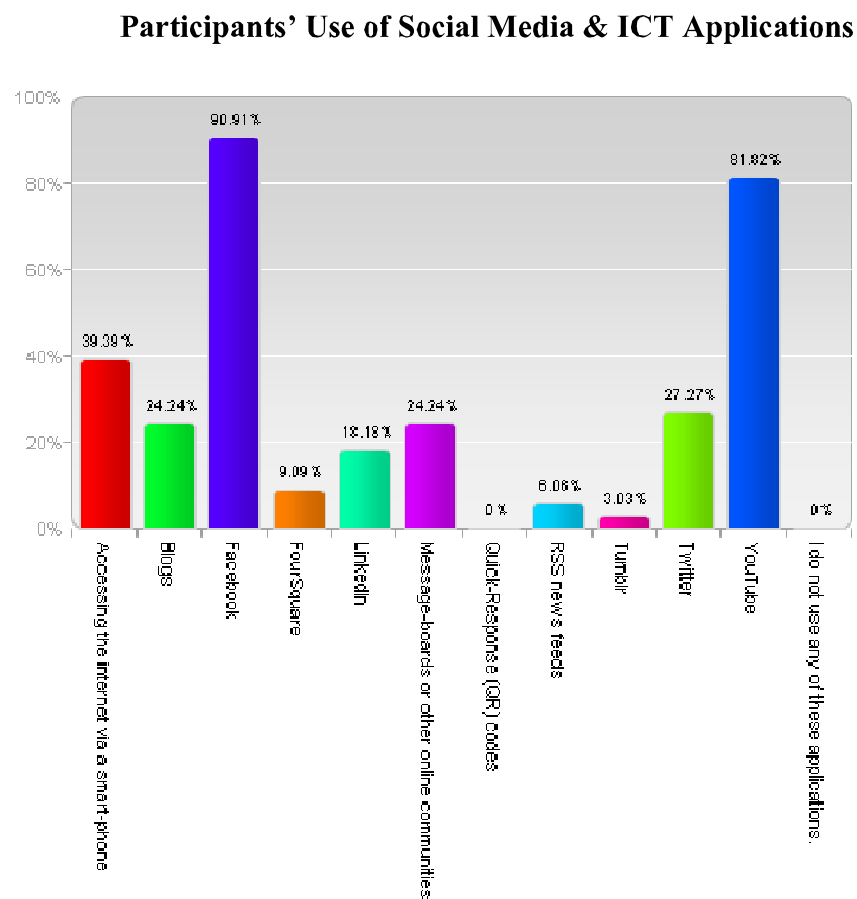
The idea of CCE utilizing students as ambassadors was discussed in the final two focus group sessions. Participants within both sessions indicated they would be more likely to get involved if they heard about opportunities from a fellow student. Upon hearing this idea, at least three participants offered to act as the conduits through which CCE can reach more students with one individual saying, “When you do it, I am definitely your man.” It was noted that ambassadors for on-campus offices are “noticeable” and “have a presence” on campus.

Finding 4: An active presence on social networking sites and making information available via mobile devices can be useful tools for reaching and mobilizing students.

Both social networking sites and mobile devices were designated as significant resources for information and integral parts of everyday life. Approximately 90 percent of the participants indicated that they were active Facebook users. At least one participant identified themselves as an active user of eight different social platforms. Additionally, nearly 40 percent of the participants indicated that they use their phones to access the internet. A detailed look at the participants’ use of social media and ICT applications can be found in Figure 1.

In each focus group session, social networking sites were identified as an essential communication tool. As one particularly active user suggested, “Social media should be a place for outreach to students. It’s kind of like that, ‘Hey, we are just like you’. It’s about interaction and getting everyone involved in the conversation.” Others mentioned that this medium is “more personal,” “something we are going to check all the time,” and “somewhere we want to be reached.” One individual who identified herself as not being active on any social networking sites even regarded it as “essential to connect with students.”

Participants communicated that they held different expectations for the information made available through social networking sites compared to that found on a University website. Via social networking sites the expectation was that content would be “actively updated,” “more interactive,” and “like a conversation with and between students.” Two participants pointed out how there was currently little interaction on CCE’s Facebook page with most content originating from the office itself. Ideas were offered to spur more interaction including: having contests, seeking feedback on new ideas, as well as having students involved with CCE to help manage and monitor it.



Notes: N = 33

Figure 1. Focus Group Participants’ Use of Social Media & ICT Applications

Considerable thought and planning have gone into investigating the degree which CCE strategies have impacted student interest and engagement. Because it is still a maturing field it is particularly difficult to ascertain the number of students that social media are able to move to action. To investigate this, CCE tested the success of social media outreach through its first *Service On the Spot* activity on February 16, 2011. The only means utilized for recruitment were online and mobile social media. Other tools were used to drive students to CCE's social networking sites (i.e. Facebook and Twitter), but did not provide the details needed to engage. This way, we could be sure that those students who came seeking involvement only received the notification and information through these new strategies. In less than two weeks after targeted recruitment began, CCE was able to draw in about 25 students for its initial spontaneous activity using only social media. Upon describing the program in three focus group sessions, participants responded favorably, communicating interest in participating. As one student who identified herself as not being very involved, "That's a fun idea. I would definitely be interested in participating in that type of event."

The ability to receive information via mobile phones was also very well-received. As one student put it, "My phone is how I stay informed on-the-go during the day. You don't have to be at your computer all the time. It is just really convenient." Text messaging, in particular, was identified as a useful tool to reach students as a reminder for upcoming events or programs. This was particularly relevant for participants who might want to be involved, but do not have internet access on their phones. Another student added, "Not everyone is able to check their email, but almost everyone can get texts. If it's something I signed up for, I would appreciate it. Not many others on campus are using it." The fact that it is not being utilized on campus very much presents an opportunity for CCE, however, the way in which it is used is vital to its success. The

frequency of text message reminders, their content, the ability to easily opt-in and opt-out, and the timing with which they are delivered were all mentioned as important items to consider.

Finding 5: CCE must be vigilant in the manner and methods with which it disseminates information to maintain an engaged student audience.

Through the four sessions, it became clear that many marketing challenges exist not only in reaching students, but in maintaining their interest. While participants called for a presence in multiple mediums and were receptive to receiving text alerts, they cautioned how easily they can be turned off. As one student warned, “Technology is a double-edged sword. While we like to have information available to us in different ways, it’s also really easy to get overwhelmed.” Another participant shared how he had been interested in getting involved with a student group, but had been “bombarded” with e-mails through their listserv, which led him to unsubscribe and rule out ever following up with them. Cautions not to “spam” or send out too many messages, whether through e-mail or social networking sites, were offered in each focus group session and found agreement amongst participants.

Finding 6: It is important for CCE to distinguish itself and maintain a consistent and visible presence across campus.

During its growing year, CCE has begun to settle into a niche on campus. The challenge lies in distinguishing the role and services it provides for students and communicating it to larger audience. Across each focus group session, participants indicated that having a presence at major campus events and collaborating with already-established offices, student groups, and community organizations is important to reach and identify with a larger audience of students. While CCE has engaged in these activities throughout the year, the feedback received might indicate that a more consistent presence is warranted.

Different outlets for increasing CCE's visibility that focus groups participants frequently mentioned included: social media offerings, signage across campus, having students serve as ambassadors for the office, and the continued development of the S.O.S. program. Offering incentives for individuals to get involved and the continued use of new technologies were also cited as attractive methods to move students to participate. A detailed list of the outlets mentioned to increase visibility can be found in Table 1.

Table 1
Outlets Mentioned for Increasing CCE's Visibility Among Students

Outlets Mentioned for Increasing CCE Visibility Among Students	Number of Mentions By Focus Group Session				
	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Total
B-Line	2	2	4	2	10
Facebook	4	6	5	4	19
Giveaways/Incentives	2	3	2	4	11
Partnering with community organizations	1	1	3	1	6
Partnering with established campus offices	2	2	1	5	10
Partnering with student groups/orgs.	2	3	3	6	14
Presence at events (hosting/sponsoring/tabling)	5	4	3	4	16
Residential communities/Dorms	2	4	3	-	9
Service On the Spot (SOS) program	3	- 4		4	11
Signage (flyers, posters, table tents)	3	3	4	2	12
Speaking in classes	2	- 2		1	5
Student ambassadors	-	2	4	5	11
Use of new IT (including QR codes)	3	- 5		5	13
Video (YouTube or BU's R2R series)	1	2	5	2	10

For CCE to better distinguish itself, participants in all four focus groups sessions deemed it important to demonstrate the benefits of getting involved and the services the office provides. Multiple students involved with student groups on campus were unaware CCE could sponsor, help promote and/or recruit for their events. As one graduate student mentioned, "I can remember back to my early undergrad days and I wouldn't have known what civic engagement was or how that meant I could be involved on campus and in the community." Suggestions to address this disconnect included showcasing how others have already benefitted through the use

of video. The University's Real-to-Reel video series received multiple mentions as an effective use of video currently on campus.

Recommendations

As CCE continues to grow into a viable center it is important that the office utilize a multi-faceted marketing approach, both online and offline, to continue to build and maintain its reach among students. The following actionable steps are recommended for CCE to enhance its student marketing efforts: 1) engage with students "where they are" and work towards adopting a "real-time" mindset across current outreach methods; 2) take appropriate steps to make information and offerings more user-friendly and easily accessible; 3) make a concerted effort to promote benefits of getting involved and the resources CCE offers to students; 4) continue to develop programming and initiatives which allow for peer involvement, spur word-of-mouth referral, and are collaborative in nature; and 5) foster and support continued mechanisms for incorporating student feedback into offerings.

Recommendation 1: Engage with students "where they are" and work towards incorporating that mindset across current outreach methods.

It is vital for CCE to engage students through mediums which they prefer to receive information and interact. Maintaining an active presence across relevant social media platforms and making information readily available via mobile devices can help CCE reach students in a way that is both relevant and convenient. Recent literature, as well as the results of this study, help affirm that "where students are" is increasingly online participating in social activities and on their mobile devices (Cotten, 2008; Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008; Lloyd, Dean, & Cooper, 2007; Zickuhr, 2010).

Currently, CCE has established a presence on four major social networking sites: Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, and LinkedIn. It is important these platforms are actively maintained and utilized not only to send out information, but also increasingly serve as a forum for interaction and discussion with and between students. It is also important for CCE to continually make these offerings accessible across its outreach methods. This could be achieved via direct website and newsletter links to Facebook events as students suggested or further promotion of its social networking sites in print collateral (flyers, posters, and brochures). As the literature suggests, however, more important than the specific methods or technologies used is the shift in mindset to fit the present environment (Cotten, 2008; Munoz & Strotmeyer, 2010; Scott, 2010). It is important for CCE to actively consider ways it can incorporate social media not only in its outreach, but across its programming and offerings in an effort to better meet student preferences.

CCE can accommodate the increasing interest in receiving information on-the-go via mobile devices by instituting a short message service (SMS) alert system which allows the office to send out group text message alerts. This is a direct and personal means CCE can use to communicate with students. Based on focus group discussions, a text alert system was a desirable option that would make it easier for students to get involved and it would be best utilized by sending out brief reminders to students either the day or hours prior to an event. The influx of free online and technology tools allows for this to be implemented without any cost (via Gmail and Google Voice). Because it is a more personal means of communication it is strongly urged that student feedback is sought throughout the rollout process.

In addition to offering text alerts, it would be prudent for CCE to take the appropriate steps to ensure the content of its website translates well across mobile devices. With the

increasing preference for accessing information in this manner, this is an important characteristic in one's virtual presence to consider. A first step to exploring this further would entail consulting with the University's web services team.

Recommendation 2: Take appropriate steps to make information and offerings more user-friendly and easily accessible.

It is important for CCE to implement different mechanisms and techniques so that its offerings are more user-friendly and information is easily accessible to students. Based on the feedback received, this can begin to be addressed by: streamlining written copy throughout its communications, specifically in CCE's weekly newsletter, making staff member(s) available via online chat, and adding FAQ pages to the CCE website. Together, this would help enable prospective site visitors and individuals signed up for the CCE listserv to find the answers they are looking for more quickly.

Ensuring that communications are not overbearing for students and kept more concise is important to address given the reactions focus group participants had in response to CCE's weekly newsletter. This is consistent within modern marketing literature which champions reaching customers with outreach that is brief, timely, and actionable (Scott, 2010).

Though the balance between being concise and remaining informative can be difficult, CCE can offset this by using more URLs directly leading to more information in the place of additional copy in its newsletter and throughout its online communications. Developing a style guide, particularly for the newsletter, might be a worthwhile consideration to aid the staff's efforts in implementing these changes.

Both making staff available via online chat and the addition of FAQ pages to its website would allow CCE to better accommodate students' preferences for receiving information in a

timely manner. Each was deemed important by students and each can be easily implemented as part of CCE's student marketing mix. It may also be worthwhile for CCE to explore whether it has the staffing capabilities to offer online chat availability outside of traditional hours. The presence of FAQ pages, as well as an active social networking presence, should help circumvent the need for additional availability.

Recommendation 3: Make a concerted effort to promote benefits of getting involved and the resources CCE offers to students.

For CCE to continue to distinguish itself and increase its visibility among students, it is important that it be made clear how the office can benefit students and what resources are available to them. The focus groups highlighted the need to showcase not only what civic engagement encompasses, but what CCE can do for students. It is thus important for CCE to look into creative ways to document and promote its events and programming, as well as to showcase how other students and student groups already have made use of the office's resources and have benefitted. CCE should further explore the use of video as a new method of promoting itself. While technical know-how is required for its effective usage, students were receptive to it as an effective way of storytelling. Taking into account the preference students demonstrated for receiving information from other students, it may also benefit CCE to look into involving students in helping to document their experiences with the office.

Recommendation 4: Continue to develop programming and initiatives which allow for peer involvement, spur word-of-mouth referral, and are collaborative in nature.

The findings of this study denote the importance of peers and the need for affiliation in motivating students to get involved and are consistent with those of the 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement and relevant literature on student motivations (Jones & Hill, 2003,

Winniford et. al, 1997). With this in mind, it is important for CCE to continue fostering opportunities for shared experience and which generate word-of-mouth referral among students.

In its growing year, CCE has already begun establishing a strong and committed audience of students. It may serve the office well by tapping into this group, as well as others outside it, by establishing a student ambassador program. Students expressed approval of the convenience and comfortable nature of learning about opportunities from fellow students, as well as the benefits in visibility this strategy could offer for CCE. This is supported by student comments and mentions of the presence other campus officers utilizing ambassadors have. It is worthwhile for CCE to consider how the use of ambassadors both online and offline could help expands its reach across campus and make it more comfortable for students to get involved.

The continued development of the *Service On the Spot* initiative, a program centered on making meaningful service opportunities fun and convenient, might be another avenue to address preferences for shared experiences. The program leverages the office's presence on social networking sites and can serve a vital role in generating buzz and building CCE's brand on campus. The word-of-mouth effects generated by S.O.S. have apparently caught on after its initial activity as students have already requested to collaborate with CCE to use it to help recruit groups of volunteers to execute their programs.

Recommendation 5: Foster and support continued mechanisms for incorporating student feedback into offerings.

To not only reach a broader audience of students, but also maintain their interest once they are reached – continual feedback is a necessity. The success of CCE programs and particular strategies should continue to be assessed and monitored so that findings can be directly applied for program modification and improvement. Such a responsive, flexible philosophy that

allows the immediate incorporation of new ideas and suggestions can help ensure that CCE maintains an engaged audience.

Maintaining an ongoing dialogue is critical part of how student affairs organizations effectively negotiate evolving student preferences for interaction (Heiberger & Harper, 2008; Junco & Cole-Avent, 2008). The focus groups themselves provided an example of how seeking student opinion and feedback can stimulate interest and increase investment in CCE. To remain responsive to student preferences, especially those involving new technologies – it is vital to receive information on what is currently relevant. It might be worthwhile to hold focus groups with some regularity – either each semester or yearly. Additionally, one of the benefits social media offers is the ability to gauge student opinion and preferences quickly, either through questions or polls.

Conclusion

To appeal to a broader audience, it is important that CCE utilizes a multi-faceted online and offline marketing approach that allows for students to receive information through preferred mediums, makes it easier to find information and participate in meaningful service, and works towards promoting a spirit of service and community among students through online networks and collaborative initiatives on and off campus. Since its inception in the fall of 2010, CCE has made significant progress on its charge to connect with and engage students in community-based activities and projects. By maintaining a flexible philosophy which allows for the immediate incorporation of feedback, new ideas, and suggestions, CCE can continue to successfully address existing and future challenges which arise as student preferences continue to evolve. This study helps to confirm and provide further validity for the direction CCE's current marketing processes have assumed. The insight gained is valuable in establishing a framework for CCE to move

forward which can be directly applied towards future modes of outreach and program modification.

References

- Astin, A. W. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40, 518-529. Retrieved from: <http://www.learningcommons.evergreen.edu/pdf/fall1987.pdf>
- Caruso, J. B. & Smith, S. (2010). *The ECAR study of undergraduate students and information technology*. (Research Study No. 6). Retrieved from: EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research website: <http://www.educause.edu/ecar>
- Center for Civic Engagement. (2010). *Annual report 2009-2010*. Unpublished report, Division of Student Affairs, Binghamton University, Vestal, New York.
- Chickering, A. W. & Gamson, Z. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin*, 40(7), 3-7.
- Cotten S.R. (2008). Students' technology use and the impacts on well-being. In *Using Emerging Technologies to Enhance Student Engagement. New Directions for Student Services*. Issue #124, 55–70. Retrieved from: <http://blog.reyjunco.com/pdf/Chapter4.pdf>
- Dobele, A., D. Toleman, M. Beverland. (2005). Controlled infection: Spreading the brand message through viral marketing. *Business Horizons* 48(2) 143–149. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com>
- Heiberger G. & Harper R. (2008). Have you Facebooked Astin lately? Using technology to increase student involvement. In *Using Emerging Technologies to Enhance Student Engagement. New Directions for Student Services* Issue #124, 19–35.
- HubSpot. (2008). Inbound marketing: The next phase of marketing on the web. [Blog post]. Retrieved from: <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/4416/Inbound-Marketing-the-Next-Phase-of-Marketing-on-the-Web.aspx>
- Jones, S. R., & Hill, K. (2003). Understanding patterns of commitment: Student motivation for community service involvement. *Journal of Higher Education*, 74, 516-539. Retrieved from: <http://museweb02-pub.library.uq.edu.au>
- Junco, R., & Cole-Avent, G. A. (2008). An introduction to technologies commonly used by college students. *New Directions for Student Services*, 124, 3-17.
- Kotler, P. and Levy, S.J. (1969). "Broadening the concept of marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 33, February, 10-15.
- Kuh, G.D. (2009) What student affairs professionals need to know about student engagement. *Journal of College Student Development* 50, 683–706.

- Laird, T. F., & Kuh, G. D. (2005). Student experiences with information technology and their relationship to other aspects of student engagement. *Research in Higher Education*, 46, 211–233.
- Lloyd, J., Dean, L. A., & Cooper, D. L. (2007). Students' technology use and its effects on peer relationships, academic involvement, and healthy lifestyles. *NASPA Journal*, 44(3), Art. 6. Retrieved from: <http://publications.naspa.org/naspajournal/vol44/iss3/art6>
- Lowery, J. W. (2004). Student affairs for a new generation. In M. D. Coomes & R. Debard (Eds.), *Serving the millennial generation*. New Directions for Student Services. No. 106, 87-99.
- Moneta, L. (2005). Technology and student affairs: Redux. *In Technology in Student Affairs*. New Directions for Student Services #112, 3-14.
- Morgan, D. L. (1996). Focus Groups, In *Annual Review of Sociology* #22: 129-152
- Muñoz, F. M. & Strotmeyer, K. C. (2010). Demystifying social media. In *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 47(1), 123–12. Retrieved from: <http://journals.naspa.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6132&context=jsarp>
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Institutional Report (2010). *2010 Annual Results*. Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Center for Postsecondary Research. Retrieved from: http://nsse.iub.edu/html/annual_results.cfm
- PR 20/20. (2010). How to build your inbound marketing gameplan. [E-Book]. Retrieved from: <http://www.pr2020.com/page/how-to-build-your-inbound-marketing-gameplan>
- Raill, S. & Hollander, E. (2006). How campuses can create engaged citizens: The student view. *Journal of College & Character*, 7(1): 1-7. Retrieved from: <http://journals.naspa.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1506&context=jcc>
- Scott, D.M. (2010). *Real-time marketing and PR: How to instantly engage your market, connect with customers, and create products that grow your business now*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Son.
- Shah, D. V., Cho, J., Eveland, W. P., Jr., & Kwak, N. (2005). Information and expression in a digital age: Modeling Internet effects on civic participation. *Communication Research*, 32, 531-565. Retrieved from: www.journalism.wisc.edu/~dshah/CR2005.pdf
- Winniford, J., Carpenter, D., & Grider, C. (1995). An analysis of the traits and motivations of college students involved in service organizations. *Journal of College Student Development*, 36, 27-37. Retrieved from: <http://journals.naspa.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=jsarp>

- Zickuhr, K. (2010). Generations 2010. Pew Internet and American Life Project. Retrieved February 2, 2011, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Generations-2010.aspx>
- Zimmerman, K. S., & Halfacre-Hitchcock, A. (2006). Barriers to student mobilization and service at institutions of higher education: A greenbuilding initiative case study on a historic, urban campus in Charleston, South Carolina, USA. In *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 7(1), 6-15. Retrieved from: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com>

Appendixes

Current CCE Outreach & Dissemination Methods	Appendix A
Focus Group Information	Appendix B
Pre-Focus Group Survey	Appendix C
Focus Group Participant Information Sheet	Appendix D
Focus Group Oral Consent and Audio Release Statement	Appendix E
CCE Outreach Materials Used in Priming Exercise	Appendix F
Focus Group Questionnaire	Appendix G
IRB Approval	Appendix H

Appendix A
Current CCE Outreach & Dissemination Methods

Current CCE Outreach & Dissemination Methods
Office Listserv
Campus & Community Connections Weekly E-Newsletter
Service Listing Database (Searchable database of service opportunities)
Presence on Social Networking Sites (Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, LinkedIn)
Google Events Calendar
Collaborative Programming (Established campus offices, student and community groups)
Presence at Events (Hosting/sponsoring/tabling)
Service On the Spot (SOS) program
Print Materials and Signage (Flyers, posters, table tents)

Note: In its growing year, many of CCE's outreach and promotional processes have been reconfigured and adapted at a very quick rate to address student preferences. In their current form, several of the current outreach methods are already implementing some of the feedback received through this study.

Appendix B
Focus Group Information

	Location	Number of Participants
Wednesday, March 16, 2011	University Union 145	8
Thursday, March 17, 2011	University Union 145	8
Tuesday, March 22, 2011	University Union 145	6
Wednesday, March 30, 2011	University Union 145	11
Four Focus Group Sessions	Total	33

Appendix C

Pre-Focus Group Survey

Binghamton University Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) Pre-Focus Group Survey

You have been invited to participate in a focus group on how students would prefer to receive information about service events and community opportunities from Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement. We are asking all individuals recruited to participate in a focus group to complete a brief demographic survey in advance of their focus group. This survey should take less than five minutes to complete.

Your survey responses will be confidential. Your decision whether or not to participate is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, your relationship with Binghamton University or Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement will not be affected. If you do choose to participate, you do not have to answer all the questions and may stop at any time.

Questions about your rights as a volunteer in research can be directed to Binghamton University's Human Subjects Research Review Committee at 607-777-3818. Other questions about the survey can be directed to Center for Civic Engagement staff at 607-777-2536.

1. Gender

☐ Female ☐ Male

2. Class Standing

☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior ☐ Graduate Student ☐ Other

3. In which academic discipline do you currently study?

<input type="checkbox"/> Arts & humanities	<input type="checkbox"/> Social & behavioral sciences
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical & biological sciences	<input type="checkbox"/> Math, engineering, computer science, IT
<input type="checkbox"/> Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Human development
<input type="checkbox"/> Public administration, social work, student affairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Nursing	<input type="checkbox"/> Health, wellness, recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

4. Prior to learning about this session, were you familiar with the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, which of the following CCE e-communications do you currently receive?

(Check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Campus & Community Connections weekly e-newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> CCE Facebook updates
<input type="checkbox"/> CCE Twitter updates	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> I do not currently receive any CCE communications	

5. Have you participated in any of the following activities as a Binghamton University student? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Coursework with a community component (service learning)
- ☐ Practicum, internship, or field experience
- ☐ Community service or volunteer work
- ☐ Research project with a faculty/staff member outside of course or program requirements
- ☐ Co-curricular activities (student organizations/government, greek life, intercollegiate/intramural sports)
- ☐ Independent study or self-designed major
- ☐ Study abroad
- ☐ Work for pay on campus
- ☐ Work for pay off campus
- ☐ CCE-sponsored events (Showcase of Community Opportunities, CHOW Walk, Day of Caring, SOS)

6. Do you actively use any of the following IT or social media applications? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook | <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter | <input type="checkbox"/> LinkedIn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube | <input type="checkbox"/> FourSquare | <input type="checkbox"/> Tumblr |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blogs | <input type="checkbox"/> RSS news feeds | <input type="checkbox"/> Accessing the internet via a smartphone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Messageboards or other online communities | | <input type="checkbox"/> Quick-Response (QR) codes |

Note: The pre-focus group surveys were administered electronically on Apple iPod Touch devices.

Appendix D**Focus Group Participant Information Sheet**

**Binghamton University Center for Civic Engagement (CCE)
Focus Group Participant Information Sheet**

Thank you for your participation in the CCE Focus Group Project. The purpose of this project is to determine how students would like to engage with the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) and receive information regarding service events and community opportunities. As a research subject in this project, please familiarize yourself with the following information.

• **Your participation is voluntary.**

You are not obligated to answer all questions and you may choose to leave the focus group at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate in the focus group will not in any way influence your relationship with Binghamton University or Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement.

• **All personal information collected in the focus group will be confidential.**

All personal information collected in the focus group will be kept confidential by research project staff and will be utilized only for this project.

• **The focus group sessions will be recorded.**

Focus group sessions will be recorded only to ensure accuracy of notes taken by research project staff. The recordings will be destroyed upon the project's completion. *You may decline to have the focus group session recorded and still participate.* Your decision whether or not to have the focus group session recorded will not in any way influence your relationship with Binghamton University or Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement.

• The results of this study will be provided to Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) to assist them in improving their outreach efforts and better meet student preferences for information.

If you have any questions throughout your participation in the focus group, please ask the focus group moderator.

If at any time you have any questions about the CCE Focus Group Project, please contact:
Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement 607-777-2536.

If you at any time you have questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact:
Binghamton University's Human Subjects Research Review Committee 607-777-3818.

Appendix E**Focus Group Oral Consent and Audio Release Statement****Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement (CCE)
Oral Informed Consent and Audio Release Statement**

Hello. My name is Anthony Naglieri and I am a graduate student at Binghamton University who will be facilitating this focus group. I am conducting focus groups with Binghamton University students to determine how students would like to engage with the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) and receive information regarding service events and community opportunities.

If you decide to participate in the focus group, your responses will be kept confidential. Any information collected during the focus group session will be accessible only to research project staff via a password for virtual data or key to a locked storage area for material data. Please note that you are not obligated to answer all questions and you may decide to leave the focus group at any time. The focus group session will last approximately one hour. We will be asking a series of open-ended questions related to how you prefer to receive information regarding service events and opportunities. Your decision whether or not to participate in the focus group will not in any way affect your relationship with Binghamton University or Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement.

Do you want participate in this focus group?

You have agreed to participate in this focus group. Prior to the discussion, I ask that you complete this brief demographic survey. Once again, please be aware that your responses will be kept confidential. Your decision whether or not to fill out this survey will not in any way affect your relationship with Binghamton University or Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement.

I would also like to request your permission to record the focus group session. I will be recording the focus group session only to ensure that the notes we take during the focus group sessions are accurate. The recordings will not be used for any other purpose. The audio tapes will be stored at my locked residence and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project. If you do not wish to have your responses recorded, you may still participate in the focus group. In that case, I will not record the focus group session; I will simply take notes. Your decision whether or not to have your responses recorded will not in any way affect your relationship with Binghamton University or the Binghamton University Center for Civic Engagement.

Do you give permission to have the focus group session recorded?

Questions about the project can be directed to Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement staff at 607-777-2536. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Binghamton University's Human Subjects Research Review Committee (HSRRC) at 607-777-3818.

***Do you have any questions about the focus group project?
May I proceed with the first question?***

Appendix F

CCE Outreach Materials Used in Priming Exercise

Student Brochure



**Get involved.
Start here.**

Binghamton University offers a variety of ways to become active learners and engaged citizens.

With the Center for Civic Engagement, seizing these opportunities has never been easier.

**Make CONNECTIONS
& Make a DIFFERENCE**

Scan these QR codes & instantly connect with CCE's web offerings!

Calendar of Events
Stay in the know with CCE's event calendar for updates on upcoming volunteer and service activities in Greater Binghamton and beyond.

Weekly Newsletter
Keep informed of the latest opportunities by signing up for our weekly newsletter, *Campus & Community Connections*.

Find us on Facebook
CCE's Facebook page provides yet another avenue to stay up-to-date with how you can get involved and impact the community.
[Facebook.com/CCEBinghamton](https://www.facebook.com/CCEBinghamton)





Contact CCE
University Union 145
Office Hours: M-F 9 am - 3 pm
Phone: 607.777.4287 | Fax: 607.777.3099
Email: cce@binghamton.edu

Vist CCE on the Web
cce.binghamton.edu

The Center for Civic Engagement
cce.binghamton.edu

BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

YOUR CONNECTION to the Binghamton University Community & Beyond!

Experiential Education
Education does not stop at the classroom door.

Experience-based education enhances the learning experience and allows individuals to utilize their knowledge and skills to make a difference in a local, regional, and global context.

CCE is dedicated to helping students find the hands-on experiences they seek on campus and throughout area communities. Locate the opportunity that matches your interests and needs by visiting cce.binghamton.edu and searching our **Service Listings** database.



Binghamton students, faculty and staff participated in the 2010 United Way Day of Caring, providing valuable service to area nonprofits and charities. Pictured here are alumni and student volunteers who helped paint a mural at the Handicapped Children's Association in Johnson City.

What CCE Does

The **Center for Civic Engagement** works with communities within and beyond Binghamton University's campus to provide various rewarding and meaningful opportunities to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members.

CCE serves as the primary point of contact on campus for people to connect and develop collaborative initiatives.

Benefits of Getting Involved

There are countless personal, academic, and professional benefits to getting more involved in the Binghamton University community.

- Personal & professional growth
- Rewarding sense of contribution
- Meaningful involvement with area communities
- Improve your marketability
- Build teamwork & leadership skills
- Meet new people & foster important relationships
- Relieve stress and have FUN!

Opportunities

CCE serves members of Binghamton University's community by exploring and developing ways to support and promote community involvement. A wide array of opportunities exist, including:

- Internships (credit & non-credit)
- Volunteer & service projects
- Community-based research projects
- Credit courses with community components
- Fundraisers to benefit community agencies

Partnerships

Think bigger and work to build sustainable partnerships. CCE has established relationships with area businesses, schools, nonprofits, area governments, as well as Binghamton University student groups, faculty and staff.

Together with its partners, CCE evaluates resources and opportunities to provide you with the most meaningful experiences in our community.



Nearly 100 community agencies, student groups, and faculty displayed their work at CCE's Showcase of Community Opportunities in the Fall of 2010. Over 500 students came to learn what volunteering and experiential learning options the campus and community has to offer.

Get Connected with CCE!

[f](#) [t](#) [v](#) [in](#) [e](#)

Service On the Spot T-Shirts



Note: An explanation of CCE's new Service On the Spot program was discussed prior to each focus group discussion. The t-shirts provided to each participant feature a growing form of mobile advertising, known as quick-response (QR) codes, which allows smartphone users to instantly connect with CCE's social networking site offerings by scanning the two-dimensional bar code on the back of the shirt. At the start of each session, a demonstration of this technology was provided for participants.

Campus & Community Connections E-Newsletter

**Campus & Community Connections**

Tuesday, March 15, 2011 | Spring 2011: Volume 1, Issue 8

LOOKING TO GET INVOLVED? DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Binghamton University offers a variety of ways to become active learners and engaged citizens.

With **CAMPUS & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**, the weekly bulletin from the Center for Civic Engagement, seizing these opportunities has never been easier.

Each and every week you can expect to find information on ways to get engaged, including:

- * **Upcoming Campus & Community Events**
- * **Volunteer & Service Opportunities**
- * **Internships (Credit & Non-Credit)**
- * **Community-Based Research Projects**

The **Center for Civic Engagement (CCE)** supports the attainment of academic, personal, and professional growth through civic engagement to develop active and engaged citizens. For more information, visit us on the web at cce.binghamton.edu (.)

**Connect with CCE on Facebook & Twitter**

The new CCE Facebook and Twitter pages provide yet another avenue to stay up-to-date with the latest news and information from BU's Center for Civic Engagement. Show your support and "like" the CCE today! [Click here to visit CCE on Facebook](#) You can also follow CCE on Twitter, by [clicking here](#).

Japan Disaster Relief [Click here for the full CCE calendar of events](#)

Find Out How You Can Donate to Help Out	Donate Directly Through Google	On Friday, March 11, the northern portion of Japan was hit by a devastating 8.9 magnitude earthquake, followed by a tsunami. It's stated to be the most powerful earthquake ever to hit Japan; more than 10,000 people are reported to have died, and thousands of people are still missing. There is great concern regarding the condition of the nuclear power plants and the harm that further failures may cause both citizens and the environment. Google has opened a direct donation page , which includes a person finder for those searching for people in the quake zone.
---	--	---

New & Ongoing Opportunities [Click here for the full CCE calendar of events](#)

Student Volunteers Needed to Work with the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce	Contact: Dr. Allison Alden 607-777-3083 aalden@binghamton.edu	TWO student volunteers are needed to work approximately 4-6 hours a week until early May, with the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce to gather existing reports, data sets, plans, and more from numerous online and in person sources. Although prior experience is not necessary, students should know how to conduct themselves in a professional manner and have a reliable form of transportation. There is a possibility that this may lead to more in-depth involvement in the fall semester. If interested, please send a copy of your resume and indicate your interest to Dr. Allison Alden of the CCE .
Help Binghamton Gain Recognition for Recycling Efforts	Monday, March 7- Monday, April 4	The residence hall recycling competition has officially begun! Each week the amount of recyclables collected from each residential hall will be recorded and updated at the entrance of each building. The winning residential hall will receive a set of eco-friendly prizes and the honor of being crowned "Kings of Recycling." For more information about this recycling event, click here .
Become a Contestant in the 2011 Public Service Recognition Week Video Contest	Tuesday, March 1- Sunday, April 17 (SUBMISSION DEADLINE)	The Partnership for Public Service ("Partnership") is launching a creative challenge to recognize government employees! Create a video <i>less than 5 minutes</i> that recognizes the importance of public servants and celebrates the work they do each day, upload it to vimeo and have your friends and relatives vote for you to get a chance to win great prizes. SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS APRIL 17; click here for more information on the video contest.
Interested in Helping Youth in Peru?	Contact: Kerry Cook kcook@binghamton.edu Dahlia Rissman Graham corazondedahlia@gmail.com	There are so many ways to get involved in Corazon de Dahlia, a project founded by BU alumni who now needs YOUR help! Check out the Corazon de Dahlia website , Facebook Page , and Amazon Wish List . You or your student group can help by fundraising, or volunteering in the U.S. or in Peru!

Note: Pictured is a snapshot of the newsletter that was provided to participants in the first three focus group sessions. In the final session, a streamlined version of the newsletter was provided.

Appendix G

Focus Group Questionnaire

Binghamton University's Center for Civic Engagement (CCE)

Focus Group Questions

- Priming exercise using iPod Touch device: Each individual instructed to view CCE newsletter, student brochure, Facebook page; QR code demonstration
- What are your initial impressions after viewing this snapshot of CCE's marketing materials?
 - What was effective / ineffective?
 - What are suggestions for improvement/changes might you suggest to the staff?
- What characteristics are important to you in an organization's virtual presence?
 - Is it important to be able to access information outside traditional office hours?
- Experiences you have had looking for online information related to University events or resources?
 - Obstacles you encounter when accessing information?
 - Positive experiences?
- What supports do you rely on to stay informed about on and off campus events?
 - Which are most effective in moving you to participate?
 - How important is the role of peers?
- How important to you is it to be able to receive and access information via your phone?
 - Do you think it might influence whether you participate if you had this access?
- Influence new technology or social media on whether you participate in activities on or off campus?
- Other ideas for how CCE can engage broader audience of students?

Appendix H
IRB Approval

Date: March 2, 2011

To: Anthony Naglieri, MPA

From: Anne M. Casella, CIP Administrator
Human Subjects Research Review Committee

Subject: Human Subjects Research Approval
Protocol Number: 1642-11
Protocol title: *New Marketing Initiatives for the Center for Civic Engagement*

Your project identified above was reviewed by the HSRRC and has received an Exempt approval pursuant to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations, 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) .

An exempt status signifies that you will not be required to submit a Continuing Review application as long as your project involving human subjects remains unchanged. If your project undergoes any changes these changes must be reported to our office prior to implementation, using this [form](#).

Principal Investigators or any individual involved in the research must report any problems involving the conduct of the study or subject participation. Any problems involving recruitment and consent processes or any deviations from the approved protocol should be reported in writing within five (5) business days as outlined in Binghamton University, Human Subjects Research Review Office, Policy and Procedures IX.F.1 Unanticipated Problems/adverse events/complaints. We also require that the following [form](#) be submitted.

University policy requires you to maintain as a part of your records, any documents pertaining to the use of human subjects in your research. This includes any information or materials conveyed to, and received from, the subjects, as well as any executed consent forms, data and analysis results. These records must be maintained for at least six years after project completion or termination. If this is a funded project, you should be aware that these records are subject to inspection and review by authorized representative of the University, State and Federal governments. Please notify this office when your project is complete by completing and forwarding to our office the following [form](#).

Upon notification we will close the above referenced file. Any reactivation of the project will require a new application. This documentation is being provided to you via email. A hard copy will not be mailed unless you request us to do so.

Thank you for your cooperation, I wish you success in your research, and please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions or require further assistance.